



## Oakland Raiders Transcript

### Offensive Coordinator Todd Downing

**Q: What have you seen from DeAndré Washington this year, particularly near the goal line?**

**Coach Downing:** "He's got a nose for pay dirt. He's certainly a guy that wants to get in that end zone. We saw it last time we played the Chiefs and he ran one of our one-back powers in there and then got in there the other day against the Giants. He's a guy that definitely is going to fight hard to get into that end zone."

**Q: What have you seen from Marshawn Lynch and how he has acclimated to his blockers?**

**Coach Downing:** "It's been good to see him develop that chemistry and that patience with some of the scheme. As you said, he's been getting more opportunities as the game has dictated. So, it's been nice to see them kind of gel together. I think it's a combination of him and the offensive line really moving that line of scrimmage, give him a little bit more of an avenue towards some of those holes. So, excited to see that trending in the right direction."

**Q: What have you seen differently from Lynch over the past few games?**

**Coach Downing:** "He definitely has an energy to him and a sense of urgency that I think is contagious. It's been fun to watch his influence on the young guys around him, not just in the running back room but his practice habits and attention to detail down the stretch here. Hopefully some that permeates the offense and we're able to see that character-wise throughout the group."

**Q: Was it a learning curve for you as a play-caller to figure out what works well with him and do you feel like you have a better sense of that now than you did in the beginning of the season?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, as far as a learning curve, that's something that I want to maintain throughout my career. Hopefully I'm never done learning lessons and getting better. So, there's certainly opportunities there for me to be more efficient with him and figuring out what he likes and what he doesn't like, but I think that's true with any player. I think whether it's Derek [Carr] and what route concepts he likes or Amari [Cooper] and what route tree fits him best, I always need to be on top of refining that and kind of polishing that down. So, there's definitely an element of that with Marshawn and figuring out what works for him and what doesn't necessarily work for him as well and try to emphasize the things that work."

**Q: Looking back, did the bye week do the running game some good?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, certainly been able to pare things down a little bit, but also work on getting some things done out of different formations or different personnel groupings, highlighting the stuff that we think puts us in the best possible position to execute. So to answer your question in a word, yes."

**Q: What happened on the sideline with regards to drawing up the play to Cordarrelle Patterson in the fourth quarter this past week?**

**Coach Downing:** "Great communication throughout. As always, going through the driver view, looking through the polaroid's, or the tablet. *(laughter)* No longer polaroid's. *(laughter)* I used to run those back in the day as an intern. Derek and I were looking at the tablet and he said, 'Man, if we could just get that end blocked, I think we'd be out the gate.' That kind of started the chain of communication down the line and how we would adjust that, which is something we try to do, not just with screen plays but with every play – look for ways to make it better based on what they're doing. So, brought everybody into the mix and tried to get it all coordinated as my title would dictate. Thankfully, it worked."

**Q: You guys didn't rep that play, as far as I know, out of that formation, but what does that say about everyone's ability to execute on the fly?**

**Coach Downing:** "It definitely speaks volume to their attention to detail. It was really just a tweak of an existing scheme that we have, but what was nice was seeing that guys could handle those kind of tweaks. It gives you confidence in the future that if you want to make a slight adjustment to something in the midst of a game that you're able to do it and not crossing your fingers and hoping that everybody has the assignment down."



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**Q: What did you like about using multiple tight end sets? Is that something you might work in more often?**

**Coach Downing:** "First of all, I commend Clive. He did a really nice job of stepping in and really being the matchup that helped get us a spark there after a little bit of a dry spell. He did a nice job of working throughout the week, knowing his assignments and such. But we feel like we have a really talented offensive roster. It's just a matter of getting guys into position to make plays, whether it's 12 personnel, 11 personnel, 13 personnel, and then executing those plays when given the opportunity. I think Clive is a good example of that. He was afforded an opportunity to make some plays and he was ready to execute and make his plays."

**Q: When Cordarrelle Patterson expressed that he wanted to continue to play on special teams in addition to his increased role within the offense, how cautious were you with that?**

**Coach Downing:** "If somebody came and checked with me about his role on special teams, it would be the first time. *(laughing)* I was fine with it. He's a warrior and he just wants to help the team win in any way he can. It really speaks volumes to his competitive spirit and character. C.P. has been a great addition and somebody that I hope young players look at and say, 'I'm not just a special teams player. I'm not just an offensive player. I'm an Oakland Raider and I've got to do anything I can to help this team.'"

**Q: Is it a testament that now in consecutive games that Patterson has had big catches that have helped determine whether or not you guys were able to close out a game?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, I think very directly in the Denver game sealing up that four-minute, which was a great play between he and Derek [Carr] and certainly being the spark to ignite that scoring drive with, I think, maybe five minutes to go in the game against the Giants. He's a guy that obviously is developing more of a rapport with Derek, whether it be because of injuries or just because of more time on task with Derek and building that chemistry and trust. He's been a guy that's shown up in a playmaking spot for us and I think that history tends to repeat itself. When you find a guy that you can go to in clutch time, he winds up being someone you look for down the road."

**Q: How nice is it to have Michael Crabtree back?**

**Coach Downing:** "It's great having him back out at practice. He brings an energy and brings a personality that kind of gets guys going a little bit and makes it fun to be out there. It's certainly awesome to have his talent back. He is such a talented and gifted pass catcher that it's nice to be able to see him leading the line in individuals and running routes and looking like an All-Pro guy."

**Q: How would you assess Rodney Hudson's season?**

**Coach Downing:** "Rodney, first of all, he is the staple that's holding this thing together. He is so smart and so gifted in terms of [identifying] defenses and making the protection calls and the run game calls and all that. He is a tireless studier, a guy that just works and grinds and is a great example to those around him. But I think that you've seen him grow in his comfort level even in the things we're doing schematically, so that he's able to ID things properly, get us into the right spots and right combinations. He's a warrior. He's an old soul. You spend some time around him, and you feel like you're talking to your 50-year-old uncle. He's definitely a guy that kind of is the glue of this thing."

### **Assistant Head Coach – Defense John Pagano**

**Q: Do you have a game to scoreboard tonight?**

**Coach Pagano:** "No, no scoreboard, and can I just say one thing about being a parent, that was tough duty. I'd rather be on an NFL sideline than run a JV scoreboard any day of the week."



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**Q: Did you have parents yelling at you?**

**Coach Pagano:** "I'm not getting into it, but it'll probably be the last time I ever work the scoreboard. *(laughing)* That's all I'm going to say on that."

**Q: What did you see about NaVorro Bowman's playmaking ability in his first game with the Raiders and what have you seen since?**

**Coach Pagano:** "Number one, a great professional. How he takes pride every day and his preparation. How he just learns the offense and his study and understanding. Just the growth that he's done since that first week to now of really learning new languages, new how you say certain things. But it's been outstanding. He's such a pro to be around. Comes to work with the right mindset every day for the younger players to be able to see a veteran like that and how he works."

**Q: Jack Del Rio talked about how Bowman provides a calming influence.**

**Coach Pagano:** "No doubt."

**Q: How do you see that on the field?**

**Coach Pagano:** "It's been outstanding. I think that calming influence it starts even with me and when you're communicating through the head set. Being able to just get guys calmed down and he has that. He's a very soft-spoken but very hard-hitting type of guy. He tries to keep everybody just calm out there. To be able to focus and breathe and play the next play."

**Q: Khalil Mack's strip sack last week must be something special to watch again on tape.**

**Coach Pagano:** "That was 'Wow.' I mean when it happened it was one of those 'wow' plays that... He's a great player and great players make great plays like that. His effort alone throughout the whole game of how he rushes, how he attacks certain things, it was unbelievable."

**Q: The timing of the last few turnovers have been great.**

**Coach Pagano:** "Yeah, I think we've handled that. Anytime you get a sudden change turnover like that, what we want to talk about number one. Our focus on sudden changes, we get more air time for the defense. They get to go out there and play again. How they responded in that, especially with how Khalil did that, with taking the ball away to take points, it really saved points off the board. Not only them not getting three, but the defense really rising up. That's always been an emphasize anywhere defensively. You have to have a great mindset when you go out there with sudden change. I think the best way to explain it to the players is they get more TV time, more air time and they get to go out there and show what they're doing."

**Q: How have you seen Obi Melifonwu respond since the New England game?**

**Coach Pagano:** "With rookies, anytime there's a growth, sometimes it's you just keep building each and every day. You come to work. You lean on the veterans to learn certain things because there's always highs and lows in this profession. I think the one thing Obi has done is he's come to work every day. Keeps preparing and he's ready for the next opportunity. When his opportunity is going to be called upon, he's got to go out there and he has to perform. I think there's always that growth. You're going to have different ways how rookie handle certain things. it's a different business at this level coming from college. I think they're growing and they're understanding. It's all a learning process."

**Q: Is he still a safety in your mind?**

**Coach Pagano:** "I think he's an athletic back there. I still see him as a safety, but he has ability that he's shown to be able to play corner. You'd like to have all types of guys. You always have to be in an emergency situation and I think to have guys prepared for dual roles from inside to outside linebacker. From nose tackle to defensive end, you have to be able to have those spots. We've been always, you're always preparing for those situations."



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### **Q: What were your impressions of Nicholas Morrow when you got him?**

**Coach Pagano:** "The one thing that's always stood out about Nick is he's fast. He can run. He has great speed. I think [linebackers] coach Sal [Sunseri] has done a heck of a job of what he's done. Great job by [General Manager] Reggie [McKenzie] being able to find a free agent like that. Just his production alone to be able to do what he's doing out there. I think it stands for a lot. The players around him helping him grow, but it's also how coach Sal and [defensive assistant] coach Sam [Anno] have done to grow those guys as a young player. The amount of plays that he's played has been outstanding. He's still a rookie. He still goes through those little mistakes, but he's doing a great job right now."

### **Q: Are there particular areas where you've seen him grow?**

**Coach Pagano:** "Just understanding when the game starts to slow down and you start seeing more things. He hasn't seen everything yet. So when certain things happen, sometimes offensively, like coach just said out there on the field, 'Read your keys and react.' So an offense is going to do something that we haven't seen or they may have ran weeks ago. That's why we have fundamentals and techniques. I think as a young player you grow through this process of doing those things. I think you have to read your keys and react. I think he's growing in that."

### **Q: You've asked him to cover a lot of tight ends and running backs. Is that something you saw he could do?**

**Coach Pagano:** "I think you'd notice it. Like we said, his speed is something outstanding. You have to play with great leverage. With younger players, it's learning the leverage of how you have to play. He had tight coverage in that man-to-man coverage that we had, 88 [Evan Engram] from the Giants made a heck of a catch. He'll learn certain things of basically how to finish on certain things like that. But the guy made a heck of catch."

### **Q: How does facing Jared Cook in practice help the defense prepare for Travis Kelce?**

**Coach Pagano:** "I think you're always looking at training camp of those types of matchups of all our tight ends. Where you get big physical guys. Guys that are mismatched to run. I think that always goes to prepare for certain guys that you're going to face during the season. Are we seeing those guys right now? No, because we go different looks in certain ways. I think the younger players that are running those look squads get those opportunities. It really goes back to OTAs, training camp, of techniques and fundamentals of how you defend guys like that. I think that helps. We always get some opportunities to go against the offense. Guys are always using that opportunity to get prepared for this week."

### **Q: How do you prepare for Tyreek Hill?**

**Coach Pagano:** "Pray. Pray a lot. He's fast. He's fast. You have to have... He's what we call a true game-wrecker. He has speed that gets over the top. We have to go out there and we have to defend him. We have to eliminate those explosives. He's an explosive, dynamic player that can change the game, which we've already seen before. We have to understand that and keep coaching those points of how these guys get down field a certain way. We have to do a good job of defending it. He's great at getting over the top of defenses."

### **Q: Bruce Irvin has had an increase in sacks.**

**Coach Pagano:** "I think the guys have just been working hard. Come really taking ownership of what they need to get down. Bruce's focus has been outstanding of what he needs to go get done. It's about effort. Guys just getting off the football and going after the quarterback. I think when you have a guy on the other side of Khalil Mack, we want the edge pressure. Bruce understands that."

### **Q: When you look at the film from the Chiefs last game, what stands out?**

**Coach Pagano:** "Three hundred and twenty by No. 11 [Alex Smith]. No. 87 [Travis Kelce], No. 10 [Tyreek Hill]. I'll add more numbers to your numbers."



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**Q: What struck you about the game?**

**Coach Pagano:** "Explosive. Efficient. The one thing about seeing this offense all the time, you have to be on top and understand the leverages of how they're attacking certain things. There's so much to their offense. They do a great job. When you say an efficient offense, that's an efficient offense. You could run 46 plays and score 31 points the way they do. They attack. They're explosive. They have skilled positions all over the place. The quarterback is playing at a high level. We have to go out there and defend that."

**Q: When you see someone like Andy Reid, is it more of a chess match?**

**Coach Pagano:** "I think any time you play division games like that and the opportunity I've had to be in this division that long, I think yeah, you have more of what they're doing. That's why you have to be ready to defend everything. It's just they do so much and they do it at a high level. You just have to make sure we understand what they're trying to do and play fast."

**Q: What impression has Denico Autry left on you?**

**Coach Pagano:** "Hard working, hell of a grinder. Guy that has grit. Comes to work every day and just battles. That sack that he had last week was a lot of power, a lot of strength inside. He's been getting great pressure. Great push up the middle. That's something that we always need. Especially with the guys off the edge. You like those guys coming up the middle and I think he's done a great job. [Defensive line] Coach [Jethro] Franklin has done a heck of a job with those guys the last three weeks of getting them to understand how our rush plan is and how we're attacking certain things. I think Denico is one of those guys who comes to work every day, puts sand on the ground and gets after the quarterback."